

12-Moral Character

Out of the Indian approach to life there came a great freedom, an intense and absorbing respect for life, enriching faith in a Supreme Power, and principles of truth, honesty, generosity, equity, and brotherhood as a guide to mundane relations.

American Indigenous,
Black Elk (Oglala Sioux)

[O]ur traditional values are based on *order, ...decency, ...wisdom, ... and health...* These endow us with the knowledge that our life is our religion; this land is our church; and the universe is our relative.

American Indigenous,
Elizabeth A. Wells (Mescalero Apache)

Finally, we will continue to contribute to our national indigenous movement from our thinking, feeling, and act as indigenous youth from the worldview that we inherited spiritually from our ancestors.

American Indigenous,
Dokera Domico, Ēbēra

Even as a mirror stained by dust
Shines brilliantly when it has been cleansed,
So the embodied one, on seeing the nature of the Self,
Becomes unitary, his end attained, from sorrow freed.

Hinduism, Svetasvatara Upanishad 2: 14

Discrimination, true wisdom, sanity, forgiveness, truth, control over the senses and the mind, joy and sorrow, evolution and dissolution, fear and fearlessness, nonviolence, equanimity, contentment, austerity, charity, fame and disrepute—these diverse feelings of creatures emanate from Me alone.

Hinduism, *Bhagavad Gita* 10.4: 5

Trust in HaShem, and do good; dwell in the land, and cherish faithfulness.
So shalt thou delight thyself in HaShem; and He shall give thee the
petitions of thy heart.

Commit thy way unto HaShem; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to
pass. And He will make thy righteousness to go forth as the light, and
thy right as the noonday.

Judaism, Tehilim (Psalms) 37: 3-6

My son, despise not the chastening of HaShem, neither spurn thou His
correction; For whom HaShem loveth He correcteth, even as a father the
son in whom he delighteth.

Judaism, Mishlei (Proverbs) 3: 11-12

The slanderers of the true dharma in the latter age of decay are as
numerous as the soil of all the worlds in the universe is immeasurable.
Those who keep the true dharma are as few in number as a bit of soil
on a fingernail.

Buddhism, Mahaparinirvana Sutra

The one who formerly was thoughtless and afterwards became
conscientious lights up this world like the moon when freed from a cloud.
The one whose wrong actions are eradicated by good conduct lights up this
world like the moon when freed from a cloud.

Buddhism, Dhammapada 124

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be
filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs
is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all
kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven; for in the
same way they persecuted the prophets before you.

Christianity, Matthew 5: 3-12

And vie with one another to attain to your Sustainer's forgiveness and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which awaits the God-conscious, who spend for charity in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and pardon their fellow men, for God loves those who do good.

Islam, Qur'án 3: 133-134

Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear patiently whatever may befall you; for this is true constancy. And do not swell your cheek (with pride) at men, nor walk in insolence on the earth, for God does not love any man proud and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; for the harshest of sounds, indeed, is the braying of the ass.

Islam, Qur'án 31: 18-19

One should be known as true who in his heart bears truth—his impurity of falsehood cast off, his person should be washed clean.

Sikhism, Adi Granth, Asa-ki-Var, M.1, p. 468

For every thing...God has created a sign and symbol, and established standards and tests by which it may be known. The spiritually learned must be characterized by both inward and outward perfections; they must possess a good character, an enlightened nature, a pure intent, as well as intellectual power, brilliance and discernment, intuition, discretion and foresight, temperance, reverence, and a heartfelt fear of God. For an unlit candle, however great in diameter and tall, is no better than a barren palm tree or a pile of dead wood.

Bahá'i, 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 33-34

Then it is evident that excellence does not depend upon color. Character is the true criterion of humanity. Anyone who possesses a good character, who has faith in God and is firm, whose actions are good, whose speech is good--that one is accepted at the threshold of God no matter what color he may be.

Bahá'i, 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 427-428

The friends of God must so live and conduct themselves, and evince such excellence of character and conduct, as to make others astonished.

Bahá'i, 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Compilation of Compilations, Vol I, p. 391